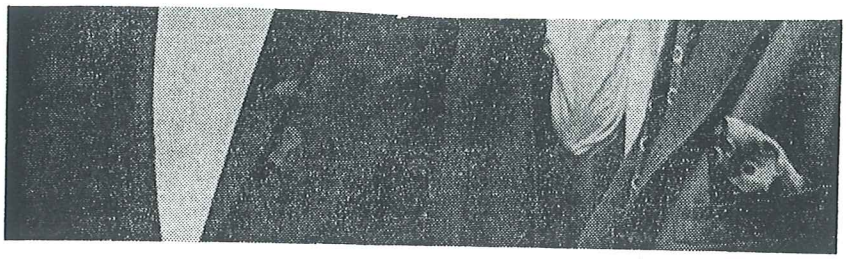

Associated Press

Dr. Bernard L. Diamond, left, 65, testified yesterday that Sirhan Bishara Sirhan killed Robert F. Kennedy while in a self-induced hypnotic trance. Here he chats with Chief Defense Investigator Mike McCowan during a recess in the trial.

Doctor Says Hypnotized Sirhan Cursed RFK, 'Fired' Repeatedly

Post 3/25/69

LOS ANGELES, March 24 (UPI)—Sirhan Bishara Sirhan fired an imaginary gun "over and over again" and shouted, "You son of a bitch" when he re-enacted the shooting of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy under hypnosis, a psychiatrist testified today.

Dr. Bernard Diamond, called by the defense at Sirhan's trial, said the re-enactment caused the 25-year-old defendant to gasp and turn blue, so great was his rage in the hypnotic state.

Asked to describe Sirhan's mental condition at the time of the shooting, Diamond said:

"It is my opinion that at the precise moment of the shooting, Sirhan was in a highly abnormal state of mind with a rage reaction which was the outgrowth of a paranoid psychosis which started at the moment he became confused and dazed by the mirrors and lights."

Diamond said he visited Sirhan eight times in his jail cell and placed him under hypnosis on six occasions.

Throughout his testimony, Diamond referred to Sirhan's "preoccupation" with Arab-Israeli warfare and his resentment against Kennedy for supporting Israel, the state which tookover Sirhan's Palestine homeland.

Under hypnosis, Sirhan calmly related how he was at Los Angeles' Ambassador Hotel on primary election night last June, had four Tom Collins gin drinks, felt drunk and tried to sober up by drinking coffee, Diamond testified.

Kennedy was at the hotel celebrating his victory in the California Democratic presidential primary and Sirhan drifted into a pantry just before the Senator entered.

Diamond testified that Sirhan said under hypnosis he just wanted to shake hands with Kennedy but then apparently became fearful—he said, "they rushed at me" in reference to Kennedy's "bodyguards"—and at this point shot the Senator.

Earlier, Diamond testified that Sirhan suffered from paranoid schizophrenia and among its symptons was a belief "that someone was trying to do him in."

After the calm recital of the shooting, it was suggested to Sirhan, who was still in the hypnotic state, "Do it again. Look—you're in the kitchen and there is Sen. Kennedy."

Diamond testified:

"Sirhan was sitting on his cot in his jail cell and he pulled an imaginary gun out of his belt, fired it convulsively over and over again and shouted, 'You son of a bitch.'"

Diamond said he himself jumped he was so startled by Sirhan's outburst.

"Sirhan had a most violent expression on his face . . . of thwarted rage," Diamond testified. "He started choking and gasping for breath and actually began to turn blue."

Diamond said Sirhan then suddenly went into a deep sleep and when he awoke could remember nothing of the re-enactment.

Associate defense counsel Emile Zola Berman at one point interrupted the witness to suggest that Sirhan might be hypnotized right in the court and try to re-enact the Kennedy shooting for the jury.

Trial Judge Herbert V. Walker, however, turned down the suggestion.